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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [KIPR](#) [TD](#)
SUBJECT: TRINIDAD LAUNCHES ANTI-PIRACY IPR CAMPAIGN

REF: (A) POS 181; (B) POS 198; (C) 05 STATE 222283

[¶1.](#) SUMMARY: The T&T government has launched an anti-piracy campaign. It will involve outreach to schools and media advertisements to the public. The launch during Carnival focuses attention on vending of pirated works and the damage it does to T&T recording artists whose creative work culminates in a number of musical competitions at this time. End summary.

[¶2.](#) With the assistance of local recording artists, the Intellectual Property (IP) Office of the T&T Legal Affairs Ministry launched an anti-piracy IPR campaign on February 17. It takes place in the run-up to Carnival, which is high season for music and DVD pirates because of the influx of tourists to Trinidad. Carnival also marks the high point of the musical season with competitions taking place in many different genres, most notably calypso and the more popular soul calypso or "soca," as well as steel bands.

[¶3.](#) Legal Affairs Minister Christine Kangaloo and Culture Minister Joan Yuille-Williams both spoke at the event, which included a performance by a local hip-hop quartet. Invited guests included the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) regional coordinator, the EU mission charge, and Embassy Econ Chief. The deputy police commissioner was another notable attendee.

[¶4.](#) Kangaloo told the media during the launch that the GOTT battle against piracy began in 2004 with amendments proposed to the Copyright Act of 1997. Since they have not been passed, Kangaloo said they were being reintroduced on February 17. If passed, the amendments would give the police, Customs and the public prosecutor additional weapons to enforce the Copyright Act. She noted that legislation alone would not win the piracy battle, saying it depended also on the "hearts and minds" of the people. Kangaloo said there was a general lack of respect for IP ownership, including trademark infringement; counterfeit apparel and pharmaceuticals; and illegal copying. She said infringements retarded that nation's economic growth, and underscored that the T&T music industry was particularly sensitive to piracy because of its small size and the size of the local market. Kangaloo added that no euphemism about unauthorized music copying could change the fact that piracy was "brutish and violent."

[¶5.](#) At the top of the GOTT list of priorities, according to Kangaloo, was challenging patents that asserted ownership of the steelpan. She said the ministry planned to engage a U.S. legal firm to advise it on possibly challenging patents granted by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office concerning the steelpan (NOTE: In August and with the help of USPTO, Post provided the

ministry with an online database of U.S. patent attorneys. On February 23, Kangaloo reportedly stated following a Cabinet meeting that the GOTT had selected a Washington-based firm that would request that USPTO initiate a reexamination of steelpan patents previously granted to non-Trinidadians.)

¶16. Culture Minister Williams spoke in support of the legislation, saying that better enforcement of copyrights would promote investment in developing artistic creations. She expressed hope that the anti-piracy campaign would sensitize and educate the public that piracy was illegal, and that both pirates and purchasers of such materials had to be made ware of the risks of their actions.

¶17. An advertising agency executive unveiled several radio spots and a TV ad. Ministry officials said they had purchased the ads to run throughout the year, not just during the Carnival season.

¶18. In the reception following the speeches, Kangaloo informed Econ Chief that the Cable Piracy Committee report recommendations (ref A), which she had submitted to Cabinet earlier in the month, were being reviewed by four ministers in Cabinet. She gave no time frame for completion of that review, but post will raise it again with the ministry following the Carnival break.

¶19. COMMENT: The ministry faces a challenge in educating the public that IPR infringement is equally bad concerning both foreign works as well as local ones. Some vendors of pirated works rounded up recently (ref B) reportedly complained that they were doing no wrong

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because they were not selling local recordings. Post is arranging to provide the IP office with a copy of the IIP poster set, "Intellectual Property and You" (ref C), for its outreach activity. We will continue to assist as appropriate to seek to ensure that the ministry continues to pay as much attention to U.S. works as to those originating in T&T.

AUSTIN